



LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

**Request for Proposals
For a Quantitative Data Policy Report Writer**

Opens February 13, 2017

Closes February 27, 2017

Introduction

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) invites proposals for quantitative data policy report writing services based on the requirements established in this Request for Proposals. LSC needs report writing services to help draft its 2017 Justice Gap Study Report. LSC is looking for a consultant or consulting firm that can offer the most advantageous balance of price, quality, and performance to LSC for the services requested.

About the Legal Services Corporation

LSC is a federally established and funded grant-making organization that supports civil legal aid organizations across the country. Its mission is to expand access to justice by funding high-quality, free attorneys for low-income Americans in basic civil matters like divorce, child custody, and eviction. It does not provide direct legal services itself.

LSC is headed by a bipartisan board of directors, whose 11 members are appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate. Much like federal agencies, LSC receives an annual appropriation and is subject to ongoing congressional oversight. But as a private nonprofit, it enjoys greater independence and flexibility than its federal counterparts. For example, LSC has initiated a fundraising campaign in conjunction with its 40th anniversary celebration and generally conducts its day-to-day business like any other charitable organization.

LSC distributes almost 95 percent of its total funding in grants to independent legal aid organizations. LSC currently has 133 grantees with more than 800 offices in every county in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and Micronesia. LSC grantees offer various legal services based on the needs of their respective client communities, but typically offer assistance in eviction, debt collection, foreclosure, divorce, child custody, spousal abuse, child abuse or neglect, access to health care, and unemployment, disability, food-stamp benefit claim matters.

Project Overview

Since LSC was founded in 1974, it has experienced significant fluctuations in funding, with its current congressional appropriation representing a near all-time low in inflation-adjusted dollars. Reduced funding has hampered the legal aid community's ability to serve low-income clients across America, resulting in a "justice gap" – the difference between the need for civil legal aid and the resources available to meet that need.

LSC has twice previously conducted studies attempting to quantify the justice gap. LSC's 2005 study, [Documenting the Justice Gap in America: The Current Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans](#), found that for every client taken on by an LSC-funded civil legal aid provider, another was turned away because of resource constraints. LSC [updated its justice gap study in 2009](#), finding that civil legal aid providers continued to turn away 50 percent of clients because of insufficient resources. The updated report also found that many courts – especially family and housing courts – were seeing increased numbers of unrepresented litigants.

LSC's 2005 and 2009 justice gap reports are now outdated. LSC estimates that from 2009 to 2013, the most recent year for which U.S. Census data are available, the number of people financially eligible for legal aid grew by 7.2 million, from 56.4 million to 63.6 million. At the same time, funding for civil legal aid has continued to decrease.

LSC's 2005 and 2009 justice gap reports also suffered from methodological shortcomings. The 2009 study did not take account of people who were denied services because they were financially or otherwise ineligible, because services were prohibited by LSC restrictions, or because their cases were determined to have insufficient legal merit to proceed. LSC's previous studies also did not count people who did not know where to seek help and who had not contacted an LSC-funded legal aid program.

LSC recently received a private grant to conduct a new justice gap study using current data and updated methodology. The audiences for this study are far-reaching: federal-, state-, and local-government funders; private funders, LSC grantees and other civil legal aid providers who can use the data to advocate for themselves and their clients; Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOTLA) organizations; Access to Justice Commissions; and media outlets that use LSC's national reach for background information on the justice gap and specific state-by-state stories. All of these access-to-justice partners need updated, accurate, and concrete state-by-state data on the magnitude of the current gap so that they can make informed funding, resource management, and governance decisions.

To assist in the design of the new study, LSC has partnered with NORC, an independent research organization based in Chicago. Specifically, LSC has worked with NORC, utilizing its AmeriSpeak panel, to conduct a nationally representative "Household Survey" of adults, who are 18 years of age and older and living in households at or below 125% of the federal poverty threshold, to measure the following:

- Prevalence of civil legal problems in the past 12 months;
- Frequency and recency of civil legal problems;
- Knowledge or awareness of the availability of civil legal services;
- Extent to which individuals have sought help or legal assistance with civil legal problems and from whom help was sought;
- Attitudes about fairness and efficacy of the civil legal systems;
- Demographic characteristics of respondents and respondent households.

NORC is close to completing its household survey and presenting LSC with its preliminary data and analysis.

LSC now seeks an experienced quantitative-data policy report writer to review and synthesize NORC's data, along with information gathered from LSC grantees and other relevant sources of public data, to draft its 2017 Justice Gap Study Report. The 2017 Report will be markedly different from LSC's previous Justice Gap Reports in light of the significant methodological differences between them. LSC expects its 2017 Report to be more akin to [these policy reports](#), subject to further discussion and refinement between LSC and the successful candidate.

This is a fixed-price contract engagement. Total compensation will depend on qualifications and experience.

Duties and Tasks, Deliverables, and Project Term

Duties and Tasks

The successful candidate is expected to perform the following duties and tasks during the project term:

- Review and synthesize data from various sources, including NORC AmeriSpeak's household survey results, other methodologically sound state and local access to justice surveys selected by LSC, and information provided by access to justice partners, to produce a holistic view of the justice gap.
- Generate quantitative data-driven insights through partnership and collaboration with LSC principals and select members of the Justice Gap Study Advisory Group (a group of research experts, academics, and access to justice community leaders that is advising and steering LSC's Justice Gap Study project).
- Working closely with LSC's Director of Data Governance and Analysis and Director of Communications and Media Relations, prepare a detailed Report Outline for LSC's consideration, to ensure that your proposed approach meets LSC's expectations.
- Working closely with LSC's Director of Data Governance and Analysis and Director of Communications and Media Relations, write a draft 2017 Justice Gap Report in an accurate, honest, and user-friendly way for LSC's review and consideration. The Report must contain:
 - A concise and compelling executive summary,
 - A background/introductory section explaining what the justice gap is and why it is important to study and quantify it
 - A section explaining the study's methodology in great detail,
 - A section explaining the study's scope, i.e., explaining what it does and does not measure and providing context for the data presented and its limits, so that access-to-justice partners' expectations are properly managed and the report's utility is not oversold, and
 - A section of findings, supported by verifiable quantitative data and sound data analysis techniques, highlighting similarities, disparities, trends, and other relationships, or the lack thereof, in the data set. Written findings must be reinforced with aesthetically pleasing and innovative graphs, charts, and images, where appropriate.
- Edit the draft report to ensure that it is written in Plain-English, in accordance with LSC's style guidelines, and is free of typographical, grammatical, spelling, punctuation, formatting, and other errors. Ensure that data is presented honestly.
- Working closely with LSC's principals, make all substantive or stylistic edits requested and finalize the report for public distribution.
- Perform other project-related activities as assigned.

Deliverables Schedule

The successful candidate will be responsible for meeting the following milestones and producing the following deliverables:

Deliverable	Timeline
Attend a project kick-off meeting and orientation with LSC principals	Mid-March 2017
After reviewing all relevant data and information, present a detailed Proposed Report Outline for LSC's consideration	April 1, 2017
Present a Draft Report for LSC's Consideration	May 15, 2017
Revise Draft Report as requested by LSC Principals	May 16 – June 14, 2017
Deliver Final Report to LSC	June 15, 2017

Time is of the essence. Therefore, in addition to fixed-price payments, LSC will offer the successful candidate bonus incentive payments for producing high-quality deliverables ahead of schedule.

The successful candidate will work closely with LSC's Vice President for Grants Management, Director of Communications and Media Relations, and Director of Data Governance and Analysis in drafting and editing the report. She will be expected to come to LSC's office for meetings, but otherwise will work remotely from her office. (When onsite, the successful candidate is expected to comply with all LSC workplace policies, rules, and regulations.) LSC expects to receive regular progress updates from the successful candidate and to be notified immediately of any concerns or delays that may arise during the course of the project. LSC's Office of Data Governance and Analysis will provide administrative support to the successful candidate.

Contract Term

The contract term is March 15 - June 30, 2017. The successful candidate is expected to begin drafting the report on April 1, complete a draft by May 15, and deliver the final report by no later than June 15, 2017.

Consultant Qualifications

Education: An undergraduate degree (BA, BS) is required. A graduate degree (J.D., MA, MSc., MBA, Ph.D.) is preferred.

Experience: At least five-year's experience in drafting quantitative data policy reports using a variety of data sources and developing reports based on customer requirements is required. Experience synthesizing nationally representative household-survey data with other information and publically available data is required. Experience working in a research environment is preferred. Experience writing for a policy audience is also preferred.

Skills: Proven quantitative data policy report writing skills; demonstrated ability to deliver concise, compelling, and user-oriented written work products; demonstrated ability to read, understand, and write about data from surveys and other resources; strong critical thinking and analytical abilities; demonstrated ability to explain complex concepts, such as probability, statistics, modeling, percentages, ratios, averages, variances, and proportions, in Plain-English; ability to work as part of a professional team and to collaborate effectively with organizational principals; excellent oral and written communication skills; ability to manage competing interests and meet deadlines; and meticulous attention to detail.

Proposal Requirements

- **Cover Letter.** Provide a cover letter (4 pages maximum) that **concisely demonstrates** how your proposed approach and methodology, qualifications, experience (including the approximate number of quantitative data policy reports that you have drafted), and terms meet or exceed LSC's requirements for this project. Include your compensation requirements. (This is a fixed-price engagement. No benefits or expense reimbursement are included. The exact contract rate will be established based on the successful candidate's experience and qualifications. Accordingly, please provide your most competitive proposed fixed-price rate and the basis for it, in your cover letter).
- **Resume.** Provide a resume for the consultant or firm principal who will be working on LSC's project.
- **Writing Samples and References.** Submit 3 quantitative data policy reports for which you were the primary author as well as 3 professional references, including at least one who can speak to your work writing quantitative data policy reports.
- **Project Plan.** Being mindful of the deliverables schedule listed above, provide LSC with a project plan (2 pages maximum, bullet-point structure preferred) addressing:
 - Your understanding of the project's scope
 - How and when you will communicate with LSC principals during the project
 - How you will manage your schedule to complete all deliverables on-time or ahead of schedule. Identify other projects that you will be working on or anticipate working on during the project term and explain how you will manage them so that they do not affect your ability to perform LSC's project.
 - How you will raise potential issues, delays, or changes to LSC principals
 - How you will update LSC principals on your progress
 - How you will ensure that quality products are delivered (i.e., that your draft and final reports are written in Plain-English, in accordance with LSC's style guidelines, and are free of typographical, grammatical, spelling, punctuation, formatting, and other errors).

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the consultant or firm that provides the **best value** – the most advantageous balance of price, quality, and performance – to LSC. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- ✓ **Price**
 - The reasonableness of the price for the service being provided.
 - Whether the price is realistic, reflects a clear understanding of LSC's need, and is consistent with other parts of the proposal.
 - Whether the price reflects your qualifications and experience-level
- ✓ **Quality**
 - Qualifications and experience of consultant or firm principal
 - Technical expertise
 - Delivery schedule
 - Project plan and approach

- ✓ **Performance**
 - Ability to timely produce deliverables
 - Capacity to perform the project to LSC standards
 - Understanding of and ability to meet LSC's needs
 - Responsiveness to LSC
 - Professionalism of consultant or firm representatives
- ✓ **Demonstrated reputation for excellence in price, performance, and quality**
 - Excellent references and BBB ratings
- ✓ **Willingness to accept LSC's terms**
 - DC governing law and exclusive venue
 - Mandatory non-binding mediation of disputes before initiating litigation
 - Indemnification: you agree to indemnify LSC against third-party claims arising from your negligence, gross negligence, or intentional acts.
 - Fixed-rate contract. No benefits or expense reimbursement.
 - Intellectual Property: draft and final report is a work-made-for-hire and is the exclusive property of LSC

Proposal Deadlines and Mode of Delivery

Proposals must be in electronic form (PDF or Microsoft Word), and received on or before 5:30 p.m., Eastern Time, on February 27, 2017. Please email your proposal and mail 3 hard-copies (post-dated February 27, 2017 or before) to:

Rebecca Weir
Contracts Coordinator
Legal Services Corporation
3333 K St. NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20007
202.295.1618
rweir@lsc.gov

You are solely responsible for ensuring that your proposal is delivered on time. Late proposals may be accepted in LSC's sole discretion. You bear all costs incurred in preparing your proposal; contract awards will not cover proposal costs.

LSC will consider proposals and schedule interviews of promising candidates on a rolling basis. Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals as early as possible.

LSC's Rights

LSC has the right to:

- Accept or reject any or all proposals, or any part thereof;
- Waive any informalities or technicalities contained in any proposal received;
- Request a revised proposal from a candidate after the closing date;
- Make an award based upon various selection criteria;
- Request that a candidate clarify an aspect of their proposal;

- Cancel or re-issue this RFP at any time;
- Retain all proposals submitted in response to this RFP; and
- Invite some, all, or none of the candidates for interviews, demonstrations, presentations, and further discussion

RFP Schedule

DATE	EVENT
February 13	RFP issued
COB February 27	Deadline for respondents to submit proposals. (Proposals will be considered on a rolling basis, however.)
February 14 – March 10	Evaluation of proposals and potential applicant interviews
March 10	Notification to successful candidate of preliminary selection and contract negotiation
March 14	Contract approval
March 15	Performance begins

Confidentiality

During the RFP process, you may be given access to LSC's confidential or proprietary information. You agree not to use this information for your or any third-party's benefit, and will not disclose this information to any person who does not have a need to know.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and associated LSC regulations may require LSC to disclose certain documents to the public, including portions of your proposal. Generally, LSC will not release any documents that would cause you competitive harm. You are encouraged, however, to label any confidential information contained in your proposal to facilitate LSC's ability to withhold it from disclosure.